

**DESIGN REVIEW ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2015  
ROOM 400  
TOWN HALL, WEST HARTFORD, CT**

**CALL TO ORDER:** 4:36 P.M.

**ATTENDANCE:**

**DRAC:** Sheldon Crosby, Vice-Chair; Members: Gordon Binkhorst, Fred Fritz; and Alternate: Kimberly Parsons-Whitaker

**Staff:** Todd Dumais, Town Planner; Catherine Dorau, Associate Planner

**STUDY SESSION:**

**2432 Albany Avenue (2432 at Bishops Corner)** –*Study session preparatory to the submission of an amendment to SDD #135. (Initial DRAC Study Session on November 4, 2015.)*

Town Planner, Todd Dumais briefly introduced the application. Geoff Sager explained the color changes to the nichiha panels. John Stewart presented the changes to the courtyard, particularly the lower courtyard. The colors were picked up from the Nichiha panels but not replicating them. Mr. Stewart explained the intent was to keep the lower courtyard as light as possible. Overall DRAC felt it was an acceptable design approach and that it would work out well.

There was further discussion regarding the signage. Questions regarding the material of the monument were stated. The Bishops Place logo located on the building was the biggest change from DRAC's perspective. The Committee generally thought that the logo was fine by day but less strong and visible by night. There was also discussion about bike racks and their locations. Addition information was to be supplied from Mr. Sager by the Town Planner.

**REFERRAL FROM TOWN COUNCIL:**

**27 Park Road and 14 Ringgold Street** - *Application on behalf of Center Development Corporation, contract purchaser and intended developer, and The Sisters of Saint Joseph, the owner of the property known as 27 Park Road and 14 Ringgold Street, to rezone a majority of the property from R-6 to RM-MS and then to designate the rezoned area to a Special Development District (SDD #145) to facilitate the redevelopment and reuse of the existing primary building and the construction of a new residential building containing 310 apartments units and 36 residential living units together with all associated parking, landscaping, lighting and signage. (Town Council receipt on October 27, 2015. Town Council public hearing scheduled for December 10, 2015. Initial DRAC Study Session on February 4, 2015. Additional study sessions on February 25, March 18, April 9 and October 21, 2015. DRAC receipt on November 4, 2015.)*

The Town Planner, Todd Dumais explained that this meeting is now a formal referral from the Town Council after having four prior study sessions. Sean Donadio from Northeast Collaborative Architects (NCA) described the changes to the north elevation including Jack arch lintels, keystone at the top, revised bands that are smaller in proportion, and capstones with zinc metal caps in copper color.

The south elevation was comprehensively discussed. NCA described that the nichiha building elements were dropped down into the band of the south elevation garage; that the portions of the

cornice detail line were changed; that the colors were changed to match the nichia on bands; that the color bands on the garage were eliminated and that a smooth hardiplank panel was introduced at the upper level of the building. NCA stated that they explored DRAC's suggestion of recessing the community room areas but discovered that it did not split the south elevation into three more distinct buildings as hoped.

Three landscape schemes were introduced to discuss comments on the southern parking area and garage. The 1<sup>st</sup> left the planting islands the same but used larger trees and added additional trees closer to the road. The 2<sup>nd</sup> manipulated the parking and islands and shifted them over with larger trees along the edge. The 3<sup>rd</sup> scheme was to move two islands closer to the building. DRAC was comfortable with all three schemes but expressed a slight preference towards option three.

Sheldon Crosby expressed concern regarding the linear length of the parking lot. It was described as close to 600 ft. long – comparable to two football fields. DRAC suggested that for 600 ft. of parking, there is an expectation of an appropriate number of landscaped islands to break up the visual expanse of paving. DRAC's concern was the visual look from the road and also once someone was in the parking lot. They felt this plan element still needed work.

Todd Dumais noted the ornamental front gate at the entrance had no details and suggested considering bollards instead of a gate. The applicant stated they would provide the detail and review the comments and take them into consideration.

DRAC thought the large hardiplank panels on top make sense but large panels over smaller ones should be reconsidered. They suggested a different scale with hardiplank materials including a panel instead of the siding. The applicant's architect felt clapboard siding wasn't a first choice but overall felt this was a legitimate historic treatment.

The applicant's architect when asked about the windows stated there was a 2"-3" return on the windows and that their color will be charcoal.

DRAC noted the west end of the south façade lost some of its presence. DRAC requested the applicant bring material samples and colors when they return and prepare for a dry run of the presentation. They would like to see various street perspectives at the next meeting.

#### **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:**

**(J. Gebrian arrived at 6:00 pm for the minutes only)**

- September 16, 2015 – **Approved 3-0. Motion: Fritz / Second: Parsons-Whitaker**
- October 21, 2015 – **Approved 4-0. Motion: Binkhorst / Second: Crosby**

**ADJOURNMENT:** 6:20 P.M.

C: Ron Van Winkle, Town Manager  
Patrick Alair, Deputy Corporation Counsel

Mark McGovern, Director of Community Services  
Essie Labrot, Town Clerk